

DEFUSION IN A NUTSHELL

ACT helps us change how we relate to our thoughts, emotions, sensations, etc., rather than trying to change, avoid or escape them.

For example, if we make a mistake or do something that we find embarrassing, we might think, "I'm stupid," and become fused or hooked on that thought. We can get tangled in those thoughts and add others, like "people think I'm stupid and won't want to be with me" or "I don't deserve to have friends." If we believe these thoughts to be true, they can make us feel bad or sad. They can prevent us from doing the things that are important and/or meaningful to us.

When this happens, and we are fused with unhelpful thoughts and emotions, it's hard to separate them from reality which can lead to being judgmental, labeling, or comparing ourselves to others. Rather than viewing thoughts for what they really are – words in our head, images, and/or sensations that will come and go.

Defusion helps us:

- Recognize our thoughts as just that – thoughts. Not who or what we are at our core.
- Unhook, and step away from our thoughts (beliefs, memories, assumptions) and emotions. Dr. Russ Harris would describe it as – Looking at our thoughts rather than *from* them, noticing thoughts rather than becoming caught up in them, and letting thoughts come and go rather than holding on to them.

The Aim of Defusion is to:

- Help reduce the influence of our inner experiences (the unhelpful commentary/images inside our head).
- Lessen the power these thoughts have on our actions.
- Enable us to develop psychological flexibility – "The superpower of mental health and well-being."
- Help us develop skills that allow us to be more present in the moment and behave in ways that take us closer to our values – the things that matter to us.

The Big Questions Are ...

"Is holding on to these thoughts/judgments/beliefs helpful? Are they preventing me from doing the things that are important to me and from 'Living with all my heart?'"

See: Simple Defusion Techniques – *Silly Voices*, *Befriending Your Inner Critic*, and *Just Noticing*

